

MONTEREY NEWS

December 2004
VOLUME XXXIV • Number 12



The Town

Ho, ho! 'Tis the season for holiday cheer and tidings of—well, evidently meetings and more meetings, as the Select Board has scheduled several important meetings for December, covering a range of Town issues.

Special Town Meeting Dec. 16

The Select Board, after reviewing the Warrant for the Special Town Meeting with Town Clerk Barbara Swann, has scheduled the meeting for Thursday, December 16, at 7:00 p.m. at the Monterey Firehouse. The Warrant has twelve Articles, most of them dealing with transferring funds from Free Cash to various

accounts and with proposed changes to Town Bylaws.

Article 2 requests the transfer of \$65,000 to a Cadastral Mapping Account for a new Assessors' map; a presentation explaining the details of this Article will be given at the monthly evening Select Board meeting on Monday, December 13 at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall (note that



Church picnic, Gibson's Grove, Lake Buel, Hartsville. Photograph courtesy of New Marlborough Historical Society, from their 2004 calendar (their 2005 calendar is now available from them or at the Bookloft in Great Barrington).

this evening meeting is regularly scheduled for the third Monday in the month but is being moved up this month to prepare for the Special Town Meeting). The four other fund-transfer Articles are for transferring \$4,300 to the Town Counsel Account, \$8,000 to the Fire Department budget (to cover the Town's portion of three grants that have been received; see item below), \$2,000 to the Tax Collector Computer Account for a onetime upgrade from a semiannual to a quarterly billing system, and \$16,553 to the Building Inspector Account.

Article 6 proposes to amend the Town Zoning Bylaws by deleting the section on building permits; this amendment requires a public hearing, which the Select Board will conduct on Monday, December 13, at 10 a.m. (see item below). Other Articles concerning Town Bylaws propose amending existing Bylaws to increase the number of members on the Planning Board from five to seven, to increase the maximum penalty for solid waste disposal infractions from \$25 to \$100, and to add sections to the boating restrictions regulating the speed and hours of operation of personal watercraft (jet skis, etc.) on Lake Garfield. A proposed new Bylaw would protect public ways from logging damage by requiring logging operation permits and establishing fines for offenses.

Article 10 asks the Town to adjust the eligibility requirements that seniors must meet to qualify for a property tax exemption, including lowering the minimum age of eligibility to 65. If approved the new provisions will go into effect in FY 2005.

In a separate but related matter, a citizen asked the Select Board to require that the sponsor of any Special Article placed on the Warrant of a Town Meeting be present at the Town Meeting to speak on behalf of the Article; the Board agreed, stating that Articles lacking a sponsor should be passed over.

The *Monterey News* is published monthly under the auspices of Monterey United Church of Christ, Monterey, MA 01245.

Public Hearing on Zoning Bylaw Amendment Dec. 13

The proposed Zoning Bylaws amendment deleting the entire section on building permits will be discussed at a public hearing on Monday, December 13, at 10 a.m. at Town Hall. The amendment was recommended by Building Commissioner Donald Torrico because he says that building permits are regulated under the State Building Code and the existing Monterey Zoning Bylaw is not consistent with the State Code. The wording of the proposed deletion reads:

SECTION VIII.B. PERMITS

(Amended May 6, 1995)

1. Building Permits

a. The Inspector of Buildings shall grant building permits when plans and specifications conform with the provisions of this Bylaw, the Subdivision Control Law, and the State Building and Sanitary Codes or with the decision of the Board of Appeals or of the courts. Applications for buildings or

structures located within one hundred (100) feet of wetlands are subject to the review of the Conservation Commission.

b. A building permit from the Inspector of Buildings shall be required before starting to:

1. Construct, reconstruct, alter, remove, repair, or demolish a building or structure, or
2. Change the type of occupancy or use of a building or structure, or
3. Install or alter any equipment for which provision is made or installation of which is regulated by the Massachusetts Building Code.

Such permit shall state that the structure, premises and the proposed use thereof comply with the provisions of the Bylaw.

Exceptions which do not require a building permit:

1. Ordinary repairs.
2. Construction, alteration or expansion of a building or structure which will create less than one hundred

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(100) square feet of area, including basements and additional floors.

c. All permits shall expire in one (1) year if construction is not substantially started during this period of time, and shall become void if the operation once commenced is discontinued for a period of more than six (6) months.

d. The Inspector of Buildings shall be notified in writing by the owner fourteen (14) days before a building shall be used or a dwelling occupied. Upon notification, the Inspector of Buildings shall inspect the building for compliance with building permit and regulations and issue an occupancy permit within the specified fourteen (14) day period; or instruct the owner which deficiencies must be corrected.

2. After a public hearing, the Board of Appeals may grant a permit for the temporary use of a trailer or mobile home provided that adequate provision is made for water, sewage disposal and other dwelling requirements of the State Sanitation Code, and provided the applicant proposed to use such trailer or mobile home as temporary living quarters while

a new home is under construction. Such permit shall expire no later than twelve (12) months from date of its issue.

Update of Assessors' Maps

On November 1 the Select Board met with Scott Roberts of Fuss & O'Neill to discuss the Town's GIS maps. Present for the meeting were Assessors Stanley Ross, Bob Gauthier, and Riccardo Boehm. No map updates or training of Town officials have taken place since 2000. Ross recommended that all updates of maps be made by Fuss & O'Neill, not by Town officials even if trained. Roberts outlined the level of accuracy that can realistically be achieved with updated maps and pointed out that once the inventory has been updated, there could be a linkage of documents, such as maps with deeds. There is no State funding available for mapping at the present time, but that situation may change in the future. The Board asked that Fuss & O'Neill submit its estimate for completing the update of Town maps.

In another matter, the Board determined that the Town waived its Right of First Refusal on the 2002 sale of property on Hupi Road by Gail Scherrer.

On the Roads

The Select Board met with Director of Operations Maynard Forbes to review the repair of Fairview Road. There was discussion of oiling and sanding the road-bed, grading and maintenance, but no agreement was reached by Board members on how to proceed.

Come to the Christmas Party

for everyone
young and old

December 5, 2:30 PM

Monterey Meetinghouse

Hay ride starts at meetinghouse and last for about one hour, returning to the meetinghouse for Christmas songs

led by

Karl Finger

There will be
Refreshments

and a visit from

Santa

for the youth

Sponsored by
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In another matter, Forbes disputed claims that the Commonwealth requires Lake Garfield to be drawn down by September 15 (on October 15 Joe Baker had complained to the Select Board about the very late drawdown of Lake Garfield, pointing out that per State guidelines, the drawdown should be completed by September 15); Forbes stated that the drawdown is to be conducted in October. Ray

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Vikki True

Concert and Sing-Along
Saturday December 11 at 7:30 pm
in the sanctuary

of the Monterey Meetinghouse
to celebrate the winter feasts of light:

Hannukkah Solstice Christmas

and to benefit Partners in Health.

Suggested donation: \$10.

Concern about winter weather?

Call the Monterey UCC, 528-5850.

Tryon, a former member of the Conservation Commission, stated that the drawdown has traditionally commenced on October 1 and been completed by October 15. According to a Conservation Commission letter, the entire issue must be revisited before the 2005 drawdown.

At 11 a.m. on November 8th, the Select Board opened sealed bids for the sale of the Highway Department's 1997 Ford F-350 truck. Present for the bid opening were Operations Director Maynard Forbes, Ray Tryon, and Walter Nourse of Sheffield. Two bids were received: 1. Maintenance Man Inc. of Hinsdale—\$5,000. 2. Walter Nourse—\$7,800. Forbes recommended, and the Board unanimously so voted, to accept the bid of Walter Nourse at the bid price of \$7,800.

In another meeting, Forbes reported that no grant money is available for the Town salt shed.

In a November 15th meeting with Town Treasurer Pat Mielke, the Select Board signed a promissory note to the

Bank of Western Massachusetts for \$288,521 to purchase the Highway Department Oshkosh truck and the Ford F-550 pickup; Mielke reported that the interest rate is very low, 2.28%.

Taxing Matters

On November 1 the Select Board met with Stanley Ross, chair of the Board of Assessors, and Town Accountant Barbara Gauthier to discuss the real estate tax rate. Ross advised that the new tax rate will be set at \$6.56. There was discussion of rising property assessments and a subsequent falling tax rate.

The Board also signed the Department of Revenue Tax Classification Allocation form, attesting to the action taken at the public hearing on October 4, 2004, that established the percentage of the local tax levy to be borne by each class of property for fiscal year 2005.

Later, Fire Chief Ray Tryon consulted with the Select Board regarding compensation of Monterey firefighters and medical personnel in lieu of real

estate tax exemptions, as approved under Article 14 at the Annual Town Meeting on May 1, 2004. The Board had already discussed the matter with the Assessors and assured Tryon that members of the Monterey Fire Department would receive their tax abatements for FY 2003-04 with no gap.

Fire Department Grants

On November 1, Fire Chief Ray Tryon submitted a breakdown of Fire Department grants received in 2004, as follows:

1. U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service: \$3,500 (Town share: \$350); monies will be used for 3000 feet of forestry hose with nozzles and assorted fittings.

2. Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM): \$3,992 (Town share: \$1,996); monies will be used for a portable pump, two chainsaws, and a portable Foldatank

3. U.S. Department of Homeland Security: \$48,520 (Town share: \$4,852); monies will be used for a high-pressure fill station, a fire alarm system, a diesel exhaust removal system, and a fixed station generator

Wilson/McLaughlin House

The Board met on October 25 with Wilson/McLaughlin Committee members Joe Baker, Gige Connell, Shirley Olds, and Susan Sellew. Several items were discussed:

—Report on meeting with Town Counsel on municipal uses of property.

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Remembrances of Oshkoshes past: This is the Oshkosh truck, shown here at its delivery in 1984, that was recently replaced by a new Oshkosh. From left to right: Unidentified, Highway Department Superintendent John Field (on truck), Select Board Chairman Jed Lipsky, Selectman Hans Kessler. The purchase price was \$88,848. (Photo courtesy Linda Thorpe.)

— Report on meeting with engineer Ted Popoff and recommendations regarding repair and maintenance of the building, including repairing the building's shell and sills, pouring a concrete basement, and gutting the building's interior

— Report on meeting with Virgil Stucker of Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation.

— Possibility of moving the Monterey Kindergarten to the Wilson/McLaughlin property, which would make the present school building available for affordable housing.

— Use of the property for a community center.

The main question that remains unanswered is a clear vision of the specific use for the Wilson/McLaughlin property. The Board suggested that the Committee

prepare a "short list" of possible uses for presentation at a public hearing.

On November 8, Shirley Olds presented a letter to the Board from the Wilson/McLaughlin House Committee stating that it will concentrate its activities on specific oversight of the preserving and stabilizing of the Wilson/McLaughlin house for community purposes and surveying the land as to the appropriate municipal and/or recreational

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Christopher Blair

Vikki True in Concert at Meetinghouse Dec. 11

Former Monterey resident and perennial local favorite singer Vikki True will appear in a concert and sing-along at the Monterey Meetinghouse on Saturday, December 11 at 7:30 p.m. to celebrate the winter feasts of light, Hannukkah, winter solstice, and Christmas. The suggested donation of \$10 will go to benefit Partners in Health. If there are concerns about weather, call Monterey United Church of Christ, 528-5850.

purposes. The committee is in the process of developing plans to present to the public for possible uses of the building; the committee is also consulting with the Park Commission for input on recreational land development. However, the committee is not prepared to undertake responsibility for school and affordable housing planning for the Town but would be willing to cooperate with any committee established to explore these subjects. The Board concurred that it is not the committee's responsibility to consider the use for school or affordable housing.

Hearings on Telephone Poles

At 10 a.m. on November 1, a public hearing was conducted on the petition of Massachusetts Electric Company and Verizon New England Inc. for installation

of three jointly owned poles on Mount Hunger Road to serve a new residential development. Present for the hearing were Anthony Cruz of Massachusetts Electric and Sandra Hayne (an abutter) of Mount Hunger Road. There were no objections, and the Board voted to approve the petition and signed the order.

At 10 a.m. on November 8, a public hearing was conducted on the petition of Massachusetts Electric Company and Verizon New England Inc. for the installation of one jointly owned pole on Bidwell Road. Present for the hearing were Don Nutting of Massachusetts Electric, Janet Cathcart (an abutter), and Robert and June Rochedieu (abutters). Nutting answered several questions from the Board and the abutters. There were no objections, and the Board voted to approve the petition and signed the order. In another matter, Nutting will look into moving the poles on New Marlborough Road and Eton Road, as previously discussed with Mr. Cruz.

Land Use Studies

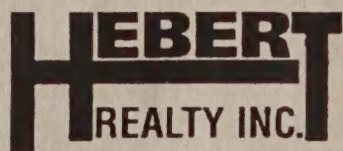
The Board met on November 1 with Nancy Braxton of Conway School of Landscape Design of Conway, Massachusetts, to discuss the preparation of a land use study for two Town properties, the Wilson/McLaughlin property on New Marlboro Road and the old golf course property behind the Monterey Firehouse. The Conway School takes on several

land use or master plan projects each academic year as part of its master's degree program. The Board will study the materials that Braxton presented and perhaps meet again with her.

On November 8, the Board met with Walter Cudnohufsky and Mollie Babize of Walter Cudnohufsky Associates Inc. of Ashfield, Mass., to discuss a land use survey of three Town properties (the Wilson/McLaughlin property, the old golf course property, and the Monterey School property). Cudnohufsky and Babize will submit a list of tasks to be done, plus a general timetable, for the Board's consideration.

Final Town Hall Construction Items

The Board met on November 22 with Dan of Cardan Construction, architect David Bixby, and Operations Director Maynard Forbes to resolve the outstanding issues regarding the Town Hall construction and renovation. The Board reviewed the punch list item by item. Bixby stated that the contractor did not comply with the agreement, which stipulated completion of the punch list within



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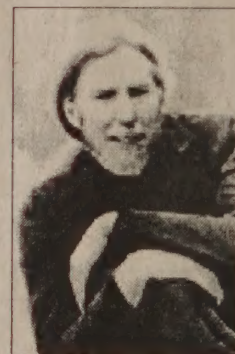
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five months. Francese asked that the Board respond to his letter requesting release of funds to Cardan. The Board voted unanimously to accept Bixby's proposal to pay \$6500 to Cardan for the outstanding items on the punch list. Select Board Chair Jon Sylbert read a list of items submitted by Building Commissioner Don Torrico that do not comply with the State Building Code; it was determined that the Town will be responsible for the noncompliant items.

In another matter, the Board authorized purchase and installation of setback thermostats with locks for Town Hall.

Scenic Mountain Act in Effect

Conservation Commission Chair Christopher Blair reported to the select Board on November 15 that the Scenic Mountain Act has been recorded with the Southern Berkshire Registry of Deeds and is now in effect. The following documents were registered:

- a) "Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act and Regulations" identifying the hallmarks of Town Meeting approval. Public Hearings, the Select board approval, etc.;
- b) Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation approval by Commissioner Catherine F. Abbott;
- c) The "Regulations under Mass General Laws, Chapter 131, Section 39A, the Berkshire Scenic Mountains Act" for

Monterey, version 4.71 revised 27 April 2004.; and

d) An 8-1/2" x 11" copy of the Map described in the Regulations and provided to DCR.

Copies of the regulations and map have been provided to the Town Administrative Assistant in paper and electronic form for distribution to citizens.

This and That

The Board met with Police Chief Gareth Backhaus to review what constitutes "probable cause" for stopping vehicles. Backhaus reported that the Police department had been awarded a Federal traffic Enforcement Grant of \$8,400.

The Board met with Building Commissioner Don Torrico at various times in the month to review building department items, including building violations and Internet access for the Building Commissioner's new basement office. On Torrico's recommendation, Gary Danko of Lee was appointed as Alternate Building Commissioner for a two-year term ending June 30, 2006.

The Board met with Administrative Assistant Bonnie Tedder to discuss the Town website and creating a database of Town addresses to facilitate mailing of meeting notices to Town officers, boards and committees.

— Will Marsh

Holiday Potluck Dec. 8

The December community potluck will be held on Wednesday the 8th, the program to be announced. Everyone is invited to join us for good food and company at the Monterey Meetinghouse at 6:00 p.m. Please bring an ample dish to share, a serving utensil, and a plate and silverware for yourself. Check the church phone message (528-5850) for cancellation if there is bad weather.

Our thanks to Mary Ward's nephew Ralmon Black of the Williamsburg Historical Society, who gave a talk last month on the Williamsburg Flood of 1874. It was, as one person put it, simply fascinating. Upcoming programs include Dr. Philip Bhark in January speaking about heart and brain health and in February Monterey writers reading original works (if you are interested in reading, call Will Marsh at 528-4347).

See you there.



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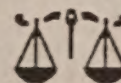
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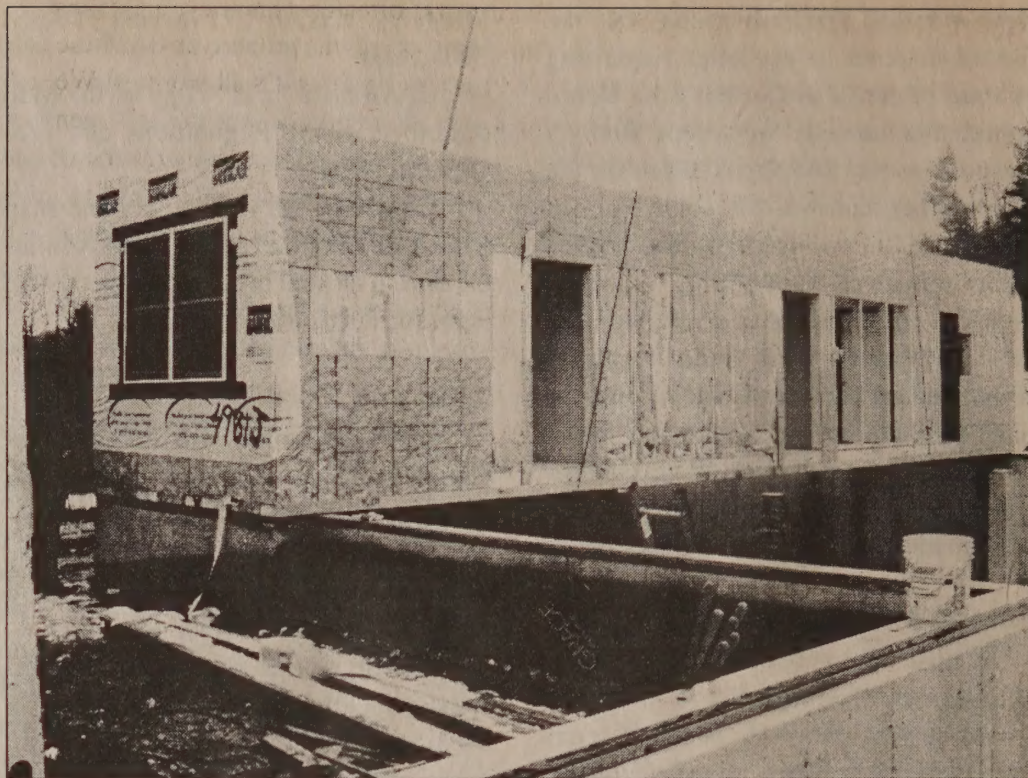
New Guest Residence at Gould Farm

There is a new source of pride these days at Gould Farm, as after years of planning and hoping the new guest residence, to be called Orchard House, is becoming a reality.

The nineteen-room, 95-by-51.5-square-foot residence building, situated opposite Main House, is under construction at Gould Farm. At present it consists of fourteen modular boxes stacked two stories high like giant Legos. These boxes will comprise the two wings housing individual rooms for residents. The center portion connecting the wings will be of frame construction built on site, and will consist of a large gathering room with fireplace, kitchen, small dining area, library, mud room, and foyer. There will be a full basement. The combined modular and on-site construction is by Fox Modular Homes, Inc., of Lee. All of the site work and excavation has been done by Leigh Tryon of Tryon Construction of Monterey.

The first floor will have seven guest rooms, two continuing care rooms, and the common rooms. The second floor will consist of eight guest rooms and four under-eave storage areas. The total living area is 81,000 square feet.

The guest population of the Farm will not be increased, since the new resi-



The first of 14 modules being placed on the foundation for Orchard House, the new guest residence at Gould Farm.

dence replaces the antiquated facilities on the second floor of Main House. The Farm is a therapeutic community and serves an average of forty-two guests in McKee and East houses and Main House. Residents stay at the Monterey facility from one to three years and then have the option of moving on to the Boston area program.

In addition to the building construction, a new well was required and has been drilled meeting Federal, State and

local requirements. This will replace the present water supply and will be a common water supply connected to most of the houses on the Farm. The cost of this new infrastructure alone has been quite a challenge.

Gould Farm is located off Route 23, via Curtis Road to Gould Road; turn left and go up the hill. If you have eaten at the Roadside Store and Café you will undoubtedly know where to find us.

— Gige O'Connell

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Monterey Land Trust News

Twenty years ago in the month of November a group of us gathered at Bob Thieriot's house where we were to discuss a new concept with a guy called George Wislocki.

From this most auspicious meeting developed the Monterey Preservation Land Trust. Of that original group, three of us still remain board members: Peter Vallianos, Roger Tryon, and me. That meeting seems so long ago. We were filled with great hope and lots of energy. Bob Thieriot was our leader in those days. He and George were our guiding lights. Those were the days, believe me! There were no obstacles. For yours truly, I had finally found an issue that I cared about deeply that wasn't controversial.

As our mission statement states, the Land Trust was established those twenty long years ago to "preserve Monterey's remaining farmland, to protect waterways and lakes, and to set aside a sufficient portion of forest land and open space to preserve Monterey's rural character."

It has been a long road, with some heartbreaking failures where we thought the deal was sure and also many fine successes. Those who have protected their land by either an outright gift, or placed a conservation restriction on it, are to be commended. Doing good isn't easy. It's

hard work; often costs money, and takes time. But it saves the property and to these and preserving folks it's all worth it! We have them to thank for much of the open space in Monterey. To our membership and friends far and near, we owe the landmark effort of the preservation of the 300-plus acres on Mount Hunger. That property was purchased by the Land Trust in 1996 through hundreds of cash donations.

The following is a summary of what has been preserved:

Owned by MPLT (in fee): 14 properties totaling 633 acres
Conservation Restrictions: 8 properties totaling 998 acres
APR: 3 properties totaling 265 acres
Miscellaneous: 2 properties, 2 acres
Total: 36 properties, 1896 acres

There have been numerous articles of late pointing out that the environmental movement is at a most important crossroads. It was, for all practical purposes, disregarded as an issue in the recent election. As resources run out, believe me, it will shortly become the number one issue. As world and local demographic problems remain unacknowledged, it becomes more and more evident that Land Trusts and other environmental organizations must be supported by those who recognize the coming crisis. The world water shortage alone will make the oil rush of the last century seem like tiddledy

winks. (If you haven't seen the documentary *Thirst*, I highly recommend it.)

Over the years the Land Trust has donated \$1,500 to the Town for planting trees at the town beach, on Curtis Road near Gould Farm and on Route 23. Working with other local groups, we donated \$1,000 to the Great Barrington Land Conservancy to preserve farmland on Route 183 and \$500 to the Sheffield Land Trust to preserve farmland along County Road, and most recently \$5,000 to Gould Farm to help meet the required community support for their APR application—which has been granted, incidentally.

As our twentieth year comes to an end we are asking you to renew your membership in your very own local Land Trust, or if you haven't already joined, to join up now! THE MPLT WANTS YOU! Our IRS 501(c)3 designation is dependent on an active membership, so don't be shy.

Any extra cash donations are tax exempt to the fullest extent of the law. Our mailing address is Box 221.

Thank you and best wishes for the coming Holidays.

— Joyce Brown Scheffey



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elucidation of where we are headed
clarity of vision through the mist
old values left in a heap shredded*

*tears born of loves lost
smiles and a wink of knowing
open palms comfort old friends
rosy cheeks once young glowing*

*too concerned to love empty handed
fearing the heart is insufficient
trembling fingers feeling joy
praying to anyone who is omniscient*

*it all starts out to be uplifting
dragged down by something deep
wasn't it all about a sleigh ride
or the promise of a smoldering compost heap*

*the light is gone soon after the sun rises
hopes and dreams harder to see
brothers high-stepping through the snow
an enigmatic image yet a rising reverie.*

*the less I can see the more I understand
sight does not mean comprehension
I look forward to "not" seeing you next year
to reach our newest ascension*

*So, I guess it's simple
we see greener pastures from afar
but it's all right here
under our frosted, guiding star*

I hope

— B. Hirsch

Winter Wisdom

*What is it that the birds know?
To fly down south is best.
What is it that the bears know?
To take a winter's rest.
What is it that the deer know?
To keep well out of sight.
What is it that the owls know?
To only hunt at night.
What is it that the squirrels know?
To hole up in a tree.
What is it that the cows know?
To huddle, quietly.
What is it that the house knows?
To shield us from the storm.
What is it that the hearth knows?
To keep us dry and warm.
What is it that we all know?
Of winter be forewarned.*

— Ed Schur

Blue High Way I and II

I. Old Men and the Blue High Way (for M.)

*goose honk on the blue high way
high above the frosty dawn
stern eyes fixed on finishing
what once was a winter's dream
wood pile and the root cellar
pickle crocks, too, manifest*

*old men lean on the meat stall
dreaming, (no, drooling) of spring
and lost opportunity
alas! no legs, no loins prime
surpass the art of seeding —
elemental communion —
ancient paths of birth and death
drought and plague and abundance*

*and all along the great way
proud owners, kings, and war lords
ply their dear brutality
their lot: insatiable lust!*

*the old men still lean, drooling
over winter's frosty stall
dreaming of those sprouting buds,
nimble limbs, furrows waiting
to be seeded once again
(of those restless, eager days)*

*chimney smoke, like dreams and prayers,
rising toward the blue high way*

II. Nimble Limbs and the Blue High Way (for L.)

*goose honk blue high way
restless eager to follow
away from wood piles
from root cellars
away from stern eye
from old man dreams
the Great Way ancient fresh
yet to be discovered
nimble limbs
elemental communion
rising toward blue high way*

— R. Zukowsky

Ice Statue

*His chisel
chips, chips, chips
the white of pain
in darkness*

*by a spotlight of purpose
his fingers shape
the frigid thigh
dimpled knee
glass breasts
cool fingers
reaching to caress*

*a tender lie
her face turned
from him
watchful*

*he cuts the light —
she wakens briefly whole
to winter's moon
translucent beauty
to break the soul!*

*he reaches, touches,
cursing obsolescence*

*genius flares a heat
he'd never felt
streaming tears of pity
already
her face begins to melt.*

— A. O. Howell

Wilson/McLaughlin House Committee Monthly Report

The committee that the Select Board has appointed to facilitate the information gathering and decision-making for the Wilson/McLaughlin House Project has had a productive month. This group has been meeting regularly to sift through the many options and come up with some solid proposals about how the Town can make good use of the house and land that Edith Wilson bequeathed to us.

On Wednesday, January 19, 2005 at 7:30 p.m., we are scheduled to present one of several informational programs to the town. Please attend to hear details of what the committee has been putting together and to give your input. If you can't attend and have ideas and opinions to contribute, please contact a committee member: Shirley Olds, chair, Gig O'Connell, Gerry Shapiro, Cynthia Weber, Joe Baker, Lew Scheffey, Evelyn Vallianos, Jim Edelman, Susan Sellew.

Steps have been taken to form a non-profit corporation (Friends of Wilson McLaughlin House) for the purpose of handling grants and donations for the property. As you may know, Edith left the Town the house and land, but we have to raise the money to utilize and maintain it.

We are researching current costs for various restoration aspects of the house, as well as working with the Select Board to facilitate the engagement of planning

Thanks for the Cubbies

A great big thank you to Debbie Mielke and The Giving Barn and Chuck Mielke of Millkey Hardwoods, both of Monterey. Through their generous contribution of time and money they were able to make the much needed new cubbies happen. These cubbies are located outside of Ms. Kobelin's room and are intended for the 1-2 class. They are made from cedar, and not only are they a work of art but they are also quite functional. The students are delighted and the hallway now looks very tidy. The children and staff at New Marlborough Central School greatly appreciate this kind gift. Thank you!

consultants for the Town's use of Town lands. Please mark your calendar and come voice your ideas on Wednesday, January 19.

— Susan Sellew

Glitter in the Muck

Thanksgiving Day, early morning, I am at the kitchen table with a small bucket of mud and three young cats. We are looking for signs of life.

Yesterday, without the cats, I paid a visit to Lake Garfield in its mud-flatted, drawn-down mode. Visits like this are loaded with baggage for me. I have stubborn convictions about drawdown, about manipulating the natural environment for human pleasures such as weed-free boating and swimming. To me this seems a metaphor for our relationship with the planet, which looks like one compromise after another in which living systems (and individuals) pay the price for human convenience. I am likely to be fretful when visiting the drawn-down lake.

This time I scooped up some mud to take home, wondering what small creatures will have burrowed in for the winter and been left behind by the receding

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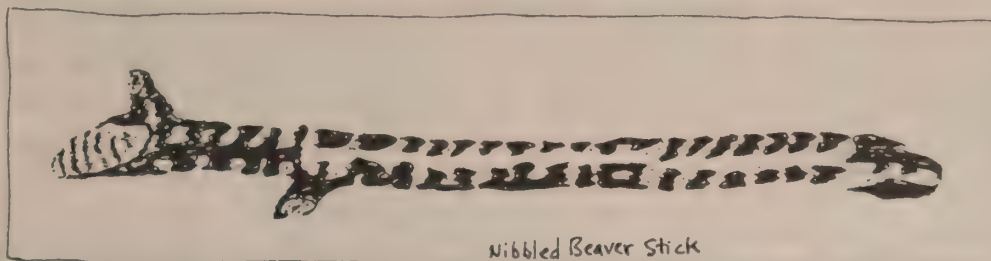
waterline. Scooping mud on a late November afternoon with a soft drizzle down my neck: it suited my mood. I did notice, even in the muted light and without my glasses, that the dark mud where I scooped was not so thick. On top, I got spent milfoil, blackened leaves, and a fair amount of what looks very like last year's garden mulch. Then there is a thin layer of pure dark muck. Surprisingly near the surface is some pale silt, very fine.

Thinking I might need a little actual water to keep my unknown captives awash, I walked the edge of the mudflat to the East Garfield beaver pond. This pond and dam are as old as I am and are not subject to lake drawdown. Many years in spring, though, the beaver moves out into the lake proper, living in his summer place, which is a great lodge in the shallows of the lake. Once the water is drawn down, this lodge stands high and dry on the same mudflat I was scooping. It is useless as a winter beaver home.

When I see the Konkapot up its banks by the Post Office, with Lake Garfield roaring out the recently opened gate by the dam, I send a message to the beaver: Go! Get back into that reliable ancestral

pond with the dam you can maintain, the leaks you can stop.

Yesterday I saw the beaver had made it. The pond is brimful, with fresh mudsplats everywhere and the decades-old lodge in the middle refurbished and domed-up high. New twiggy breaks the surface near the lodge, winter food



Nibbled Beaver Stick

supply with its butt ends stuck down in the mud at the bottom of the pond. When the ice comes, this beaver will be able to swim out under the ice, snip off a short stick, and take it inside the lodge. Sitting up on the solid shelf inside, above the waterline, he will delicately nibble the bark from the twig, turning it as we do an ear of corn. Finally, keeping the winter residence tidy, he will swim out with it, through the underwater entrance, and release it into the water where it will eventually float down current to the dam. In spring there will be many of these bright peeled sticks washed up against the dam, like a winter's worth of apple cores and corncobs.

Here at the kitchen table, with lamp and hand lens, I am not seeing much action in the mud bucket. I put a little muck in a white enamel pan with half an inch of water and tip it this way and that, like panning for gold. So far I've made out one wiggly midge larva, red, and several teeny springtails or collembolans, which are popping from the surface and bouncing off the sides of my pan.

There is a familiar glitter in the silt. I see it every time I wash carrots in the kitchen sink. This is bits of mica from the sandy loam of our garden, and here they are, way down in the Lake Garfield mud zone. The beaver is patching his dam with this, I am growing carrots in it, the midge larva is living in it for the winter. Signs of life? We are the web, the glitter and the mud.

— Bonner J. McAllester

30

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Friday, 7:30 – 7:00
Sun, 8:00 – noon

December Schedule for Highland Communities Initiative Events

Smart Growth In Massachusetts: The Commonwealth Capital Initiative **Wed. December 1, Cummington Community House, 6 p.m.**

Bob Mitchell, Special Assistant for Sustainable Development in the Governor's new Office of Commonwealth Development, will talk about the new Commonwealth Capital Fund and how it impacts Highlands towns.

The fee is \$5 per person. Please register in advance by calling (413) 268-8219 or emailing jchristensen@ttor.org.

Special Permits and Variances **Monday, December 6, Buckland Community Center, 7 p.m.**

Are you clear about the difference in purpose and process between special permits and variances? Greenfield Attorney Donna MacNichol will cover key issues and the complex criteria for making decisions on variances and special permits, as well as important procedural requirements to avoid automatic approval. Cosponsored with Franklin Regional Council of Governments and Citizen Planner Training Collaborative.

The fee is \$25 per person. For information or to register, call Peggy Sloan at (413) 774-1194.



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**Sunday Service · 10 a.m.
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Elizabeth Goodman, Pastor**

**For Information and Assistance:
528-5850**

Subdivision Regulation Series: Small Changes That Make a Big Difference **Tuesday, December 7, Chesterfield Senior Center, 7 p.m.**

Get advice and tips about Subdivision Regulations from Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Development for Northampton. Knowing about application fees, submittal requirements, performance guarantees, and Homeowners' Associations will make your job much easier when you are eventually faced with reviewing a subdivision plan.

The fee is \$5 per person. Please register in advance by calling (413) 268-8219 or emailing jchristensen@ttor.org.

Regional Trails Roundtable: Designing and Building Public Trails **Wednesday, December 8, Meekins Library, Williamsburg, 7 p.m.**

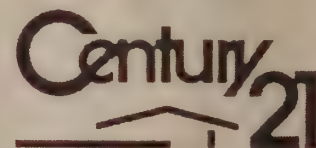
This roundtable discussion meeting will tackle the many concerns and challenges associated with building and maintaining community trails. Led by Peter Jensen, an expert in building trails across New England, the meeting will allow participants to bring specific projects and questions forward for group problem-solving, and provide examples of successful trails throughout the region. Come to obtain help on your project, to learn more about what your neighboring towns are working on, and to share your experiences on this timely topic.

Fee is \$5 per person. Please register in advance by calling (413) 268-8219 or emailing jchristensen@ttor.org.

Headwaters of the Sacred Circle

The map of the Monterey Quadrangle on the United States Department of the Interior Survey shows the high ridge contour of 1400 feet above sea level that overlooks lower River Road as well as Route 57 into New Marlborough to the pinnacle of Dry Hill. Views are spectacular to the west, where from a woodland setting there is said to be a Native American medicine wheel. It is a ring of stones spaced around in a circle that point to celestial compass points of the seasons. It's exact location is also a well-kept secret.

Dry Hill was appropriately named for the sand and rock outcroppings warmed by the sun, which provide comfort and dens to rattlesnakes. It also looks down on the small cluster of white buildings of the Berkshire Hatchery surrounded by tall pines that reach into the blue sky of Indian Summer. Near the trailhead next to the Kelt House where trout eggs are hatched, there is a geo-



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logical phenomena called a kettle. It is essentially a deep hole or void in the side of a hill several hundred feet deep, left when the glacier melted. This one is fairly unusual among kettle holes because it contains no water at the steep bottom. Far below it is the aquifer that provides a year-round supply of cold water, between 40 and 45 degrees, to hatch the eggs.

Engineers say that for this to happen, the aquifer may be almost a mile down.

Hydrostatic pressure from stratifications of the earth force the water up to the surface and into the artesian wells that gravity feed the Hatchery facilities. The final inducement of roe from brood trout has just taken place, with artificial insemination of the milt from males; the eggs are then placed in trays under simulated actual stream conditions. While this was happening, two species of our wild trout were also spawning now instead of spring as might be expected. Up in the

confluence of Rawson Brook and the Konkapot River, both brown and brook trout have been performing the ancient ritual to perpetuate their kind. Rainbow trout can also spawn in fall or in spring, but not both, as their annual mission is complete and exhausted with either one or the other.

The Mahican word for "confluence" is "Skatacook," "where the waters come together," probably a preferred place for camping and fishing. This is also a place of some spirituality, and just beyond Diane's Trail bridge a bench has been placed for reflection.

From the very top of Dry Hill, there is a view all the way to where the Green River meets the Housatonic, the site of the Native American Village called Skatacook. There too the autumnal seeding of waters over gravel beds promises the fertility of another spring, completing the cycle, reflected in the paths of planets, as measured by a ring of stones, a sacred circle with a message of the season.

— George Emmons



Alice O. Howell's new book!



Young Lara, with her refugee parents, finds herself marooned in an isolated, snowbound little hotel in Norway before WWII. Left alone, she is befriended by two eccentric elderly Englishmen, who teach her to ski, and receives deep love and wisdom from the grandfatherly carpenter Andreas, who teaches her that Christmas is really a universal event open to every heart and every faith. A luminous story by the author of THE BEEJUM BOOK.

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Sandisfield Historical Society News

The Annual Wine and Cheese Party held on Sunday, November 7, was also a Surprise Party for Norton Fletcher to honor his seventeen years of service to the Society. Many people arrived early so that they could surprise Norton. Well, he was truly surprised, since he was quite speechless when everyone yelled out "Surprise and Happy Retirement." Norton was presented with a beautiful wooden plaque from the Society and a Citation certificate signed by State Senator, Andrea Nuciforo recognizing his seventeen years of service to the Society and the community. Thanks to Ron Myers and Willard Platt for your efforts in getting the plaque and certificate.

A great number of people came to honor Norton that day. We had a great variety of delicious foods, a special cake, wine, and hot apple cider, all donated by both members and nonmembers of the community. Thanks Marcia Ignace, Joyce and Tuffy Campetti, Kay Dirgo, Cora Roraback, and Anne Hoffman for helping with addressing invitations, cleaning the building, decorating the tables, and generally organizing a very well attended fun event.

Norton continues to be a very visible presence at our monthly meetings. He faithfully cooks up some wonderful crock-pot goody for our potluck lun-

cheons. Of course Norton is really loved and appreciated for all that he has done for the Society during his presidency and continues to do in his current role as advisory board member. I for one, as the new president, will need to consult with him about many of the historical artifacts that are now housed in our wonderful almost 100-year-old meetinghouse. I will need all of the help I can get from Norton as well as any of the volunteers.

Now that I am president, I see the building and the organization from a very different viewpoint. My eyes are now wide open since I now feel quite responsible for it all. I see that we need to focus on the maintenance of the building and the organization of the documents housed within. There is a lot to be done: painting the building, repairing the chimney flashing and roof, reviewing and cataloguing where necessary all Society related documents, looking at our mission, looking for ways to reach the community through lectures and workshops, and of course working on our usual fund-raising activities to keep us financially afloat.

Our next event, the Christmas/Holiday Fair, will be on December 11, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Firehouse #2 in Sandisfield. The Recreation Committee has arranged for horse and wagon rides at 11 a.m. and has also arranged for Santa to come at 1 p.m. There will be a penny auction, hand-crafted Christmas items for sale, a raffle for a doll house, and many more kid/adult activities and vendors. Do your last-minute Holiday shopping at the fair. Hope to see you there.

Please call me at (413) 258-4786 for further information, or if you would like to be a vendor.

— Josephine Freedman



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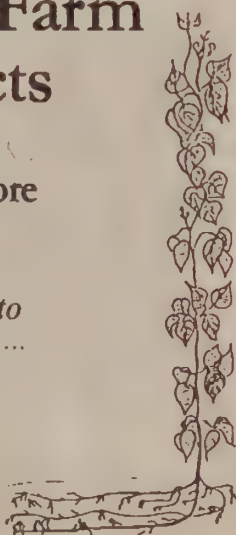
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Green Corner

What Is an Appropriate Holiday Gift?

As the holiday season approaches, we have an opportunity to be thoughtful, creative, and sensitive to our environment. Here are some questions to ask before shopping this holiday season:

- Will this gift have lasting meaning?
- What resources were used to produce it?
- What will happen when it is discarded (or does it need to be discarded)?

When possible this holiday season (and throughout the year), consider shopping in locally owned businesses and seek out locally made items. Homemade goods from the kitchen are a satisfying gift. For friends who love music, movies or theatre, entry to a performance is just the ticket. Some friends may appreciate a charitable donation in their name. A gift of time by helping with chores, child care or companionship might be a great gift. These gifts mean less packaging and less waste, and strengthen our community.

Find out other ideas for the holiday season by visiting <http://www.cetonline.org/rewrap2.pdf> <http://www.uvm.edu/recycle/?Page=WastePrevention/holiday.html>

— Ruth Dinerman, CET

Sandisfield Arts Center Presents Holiday Program

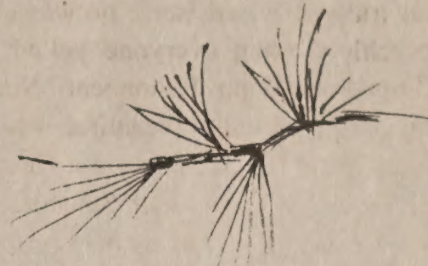
On Saturday, December 4, at 8 p.m., The Sandisfield Arts Center presents its second annual Christmas Extravaganza. The program takes place at the Arts Center on Route 57 in Sandisfield, and features two short plays, a holiday story, a stand-up comic, and carol singing. All are welcome. Admission is \$5. Children are admitted free and holiday refreshments will be served.

"The Little Christmas Tree" by Victorian writer Henry van Dyke is a children's play about a little pine tree always wishing it would look more splendid and colorful like the other trees in the forest. "Gabriel Grub's Christmas Revelation" is a Dickens play starring Ben Luxon of Sandisfield and George Preston of Tolland, featuring a world-hating village sexton and gravedigger who is made aware of the folly of his ways on Christmas Eve.

Sandisfield's resident author and playwright, Val Coleman, will read a holiday story of his own creation, written especially for this evening. Comic Walter Dixon presents his impressions of the "festive" season, while local entertainer Karl Finger of Monterey will lead the audience and Christmas choir in carol

PTA Selling Christmas Trees

The Monterey-New Marlborough School PTA is offering Christmas trees for sale. These will be available at the Monterey General Store, thanks to the generosity of Kenn at the store. The trees are a mix of Fraser firs and Balsams. Thank you for your support.



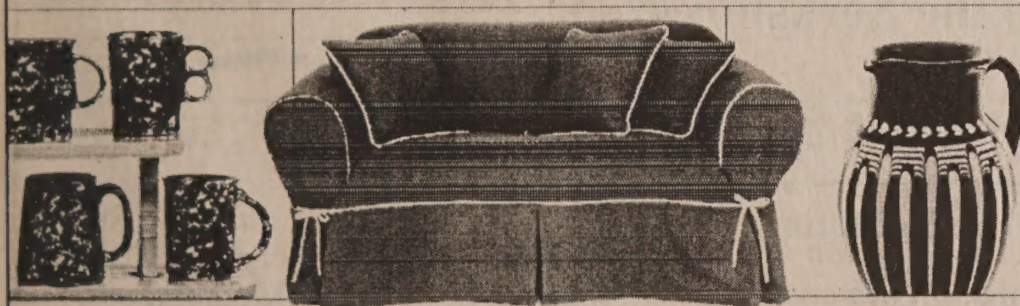
Bidwell House Christmas Party Dec. 12

The Bidwell House Museum will hold its annual Christmas party on Sunday, December 12th, with an open house from 2 to 4 p.m. featuring an eighteenth-century Christmas celebration and decorations. There will be greenery and garlands and light refreshments. The event is free and open to the public.

singing. Holiday art by Sandisfield children will be displayed on the lower level. Sandisfield 2005 calendars and notecards will also be available.

For directions, call (413) 258-4994 or visit www.sandisfieldartscenter.org.

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Eleanor Kimberley

To A Young Squirrel

Frisking about in the trees you go,
Then hurrying down to the ground
below
Where you find the acorns green and
brown
Which the old oak tree has shaken
down.
Surely, there must be One on high
Who is looking down from an autumn
sky
Bidding you gather the nuts you do
To store for the cold days ahead of you.
How else would you know of the cold
and snow?

Winter Road Closings

Director of Operations Maynard Forbes has announced that the following roads or **sections** of roads will be closed during the winter months and will not be plowed or sanded.

Wallace Hall Road
Part of Wellman Road
Part of Beartown Road
Part of Chestnut Hill Road
Part of Carrington Battelle Road
Part of Swann Road
Part of Gould Road

*(For you were not here a year ago)
Did your mother turn you out on your
own
To gather your winter's food all alone,
Knowing full well that God would care
And show you the nuts that had fallen
there?
Then scurry and gather them in
And hide them away in your acorn bin;
There nestled away where no one
knows
You'll have plenty to eat when the
north wind blows.*

— Eleanor Kimberley

Selection of Recent Arrivals at the Monterey Library

Below is a list of some of the new titles received recently at the Monterey Library. There are many others—check them out!

Adult Fiction

Philip Roth, *The Plot Against America*
Kate Atkinson, *Case Histories*

Adult Nonfiction

David Laskin, *The Children's Blizzard*
Richard Fortey, *Earth: An Intimate History*
Elmer Renner, *Sea of Sharks: A Sailor's World*
Peter H. Beard, *Zara's Tales: Perilous Escapades in Equatorial Africa*
Lauren Slater, *Opening Skinner's Box: Great Psychological Experiments of the Twentieth Century*

Contributors

We are most grateful to the following readers for recent contributions to support the *Monterey News*. Thanks, folks.

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Hildegard Wolff

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Calendar

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board meeting, 8:30 a.m.–noon, Town Offices.

Sunday, December 5: Christmas Party at the Monterey Meetinghouse at 2:30 p.m. Hay ride, Karl Finger and Santa. See p.3.

Wednesday, December 8:

Community Potluck Supper at 6 p.m. in the Monterey Meetinghouse. For details see p.7.

Hannukkah begins.

Thursday, December 9: Free blood pressure clinic, 2:30–3:30 p.m., Town Offices, administered by Visiting Nurses Assoc.

Saturday, December 11: Vikki True in Concert at the Meetinghouse at 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation \$10. See p.6

Sunday, December 12: Bidwell House Museum Annual Christmas Party/Open House, 2–4 p.m. Free and open to public. Call 528-6888. See p.17.

Monday, December 13: Public Hearing on deletion of Zoning Bylaws at 10 a.m. at Town Hall. See p.2.

Select Board holds its evening board meeting at 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

Thursday, December 16: Special Town Meeting at 7 p.m. at the Monterey Firehouse. See p.1 for details.

Wednesday, December 22: Winter Solstice.

Saturday, December 25:

Christmas Day, Town Hall closed.

No contra dance at Sheffield Grange. See you in January.

Sunday, December 26: Full Moon.

Monday, December 27: No Select Board meeting.

Saturday, January 1: New Year's Day, Town Hall closed, no meetings.



The Observer

October 26–November 25

High temp. (11/8) 64°
 Low temp. (11/10) 12°
 Avg. high temp. 48.9°
 Avg. low temp. 28.4°
 Avg. temp. 39.2°
 Total precipitation
 (rain and melted snow) 2.19"
 Snowfall 4.5"
 Precipitation occurred on 12 days.



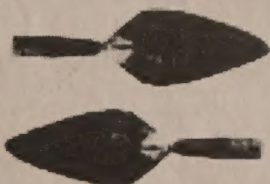
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Contributions from local artists this month:

Pat Arnow, p. 19; George Emmons, p. 15;

Bonner McAllester, p. 13; Glynis Oliver, pp. 7, 16, 17, 19.

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